

PICTURES OF RUSTIC

LANDSCAPE

BY

BIRKET FOSTER

WITH PORTRAIT AND
THIRTY ENGRAVINGS





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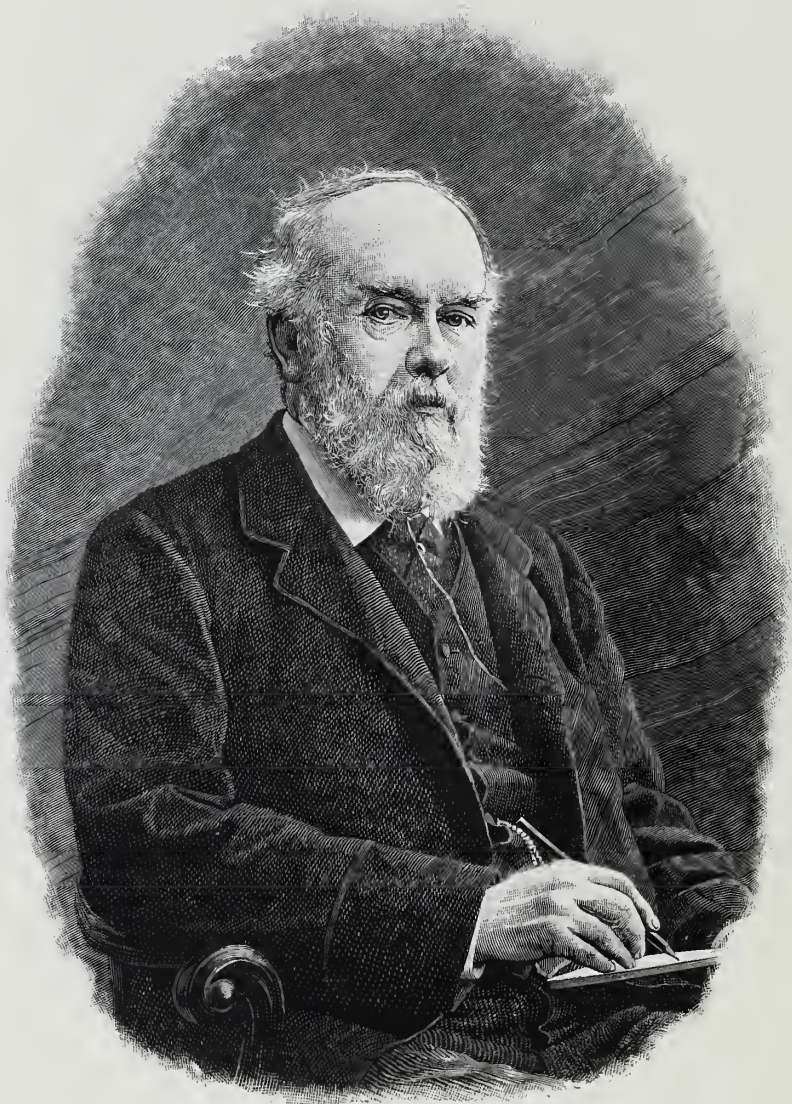
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LANDSCAPE

BIRKET FOSTER



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Dr. L. S. S. S.

PICTURES OF RUSTIC LANDSCAPE

BY
BIRKET FOSTER

*WITH PASSAGES IN PROSE AND VERSE
SELECTED BY*

JOHN DAVIDSON
AUTHOR OF 'BALLADS AND SONGS'

WITH PORTRAIT AND THIRTY ENGRAVINGS

LONDON
JOHN C. NIMMO
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN selecting passages of prose and verse to escort Mr. Birket Foster's 'Pictures of Rustic Landscape,' two considerations among others were constantly present:—the importance of variety, and the necessity of a lax correspondence between the letter-press and the engravings.

The latter consideration suggests the remark, that, unless the one is engaged in what is justly regarded as the inferior employment of illustrating the other, the artist in black and white seldom depicts landscape with an eye to the same effects and with appreciation of the same details as commend themselves to the artist in words. Nevertheless the reader and spectator will find remarkable instances of close agreement even in minor points between several of the pictures and the descriptions in their attendant passages, and always, of course, a definite connection of some kind.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The general purpose in making these selections was not to provide a descriptive catalogue, but to present in an anthology the thoughts and feelings of some lovers of the country and of country life.

JOHN DAVIDSON.

June, 1895.

For their permission to include certain passages which are copyright, thanks are due to the following authors and publishers:—to Messrs. Macmillan for the extracts from Matthew Arnold's *Scholar-Gipsy* and from Tennyson's 'Miller's Daughter'; to Messrs. Longman for the extract from Richard Jefferies' 'Field and Hedgerow'; to Messrs. W. Blackwood & Sons for the extract from George Eliot's 'Felix Holt'; to Messrs. Seeley & Co. for the extract from P. G. Hamerton's 'Unknown River'; to Mr. Joseph Pennell and Mr. Fisher Unwin for the extract from 'The Stream of Pleasure'; to Mr. W. Fraser Rae for the extract from M. Taine's 'Notes on England'; to Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. for the extracts from John Burroughs, R. Grant White, and Emerson; and to Messrs. Chatto & Windus and Mr. C. Baxter for the extract from R. L. Stevenson's 'Virginibus Puerisque.'

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AT THE BROOKSIDE.

‘A water-ousel with white breast rises and flies on ; again disturbed, he makes a circle, and returns to the stream behind. On the moist earth there is the print of a hare’s pad ; here is a fox-glove out in flower.’



SUMMER IN SOMERSET.

BLACKBIRD and thrush commence to sing as the heavy heat decreases; the bloom on the apples trees is loose now, and the blackbird as he springs from the bough shakes down flakes of blossom.

Towards even a wind moves among the lengthening shadows, and my footsteps involuntarily seek the glen, where a streamlet trickles down over red flat stones which resound musically as the water strikes them. Ferns are growing so thickly in the hedge that soon it will seem composed of their fronds; the first June rose hangs above their green tips. A water-ousel with white breast rises and flies on; again disturbed, he makes a circle, and returns to the stream behind. On the moist earth there is the print of a hare's pad; here is a foxglove out in flower; and now as the incline rises heather thickens on the slope. Sometimes we wander beside the streamlet which goes a mile into the coombe—the shadow is deep

and cool in the vast groove of the hill, the shadow accumulates there, and is pressed by its own weight—up slowly as far as the ‘sog,’ or peaty place where the spring rises, and where the sundew grows. Sometimes climbing steep and rocky walls—scarce sprinkled with grass—we pause every other minute to look down on the great valley which reaches across to Dunkery. The horned sheep, which are practically wild, like wild creatures, have worn out holes for themselves to lie in beside the hill. If resolution is strong, we move through the dark heather (soon to be purple), startling the heath-poults, or black game, till at last the Channel opens, and the far-distant Flat and Steep Holms lie, as it looks, afloat on the dim sea. This is labour enough; stern indeed must be the mind that could work at summer’s noon in Somerset, when the apple vineyards slumber; when the tall foxgloves stand in the heavy heat and the soft air warms the deepest day-shadow so that nothing is cool to the touch but the ferns. Is there anything so good as to do nothing?

Fame travels slowly up these breathless hills, and pauses overcome in the heated hollow lanes. A famous wit of European reputation, when living, resided in Somerset. A traveller one day chancing to pass through the very next parish inquired of a local man if somebody called Sydney Smith did not once live in that neighbourhood. ‘Yes,’ was the reply, ‘I’ve heard all about Sydney Smith; I can

tell you. He was a highwayman, and was hung on that hill there.' He would have shown the very stump of the gallows-tree as proof positive, like Jack Cade's bricks, alive in the chimney to this day.

There really was a highwayman, however, whose adventures are said to have suggested one of the characters in the romance of 'Lorna Doone.' This desperate fellow had of course his houses of call, where he could get refreshment safely, on the moors. One bitter winter's day the robber sat down to a hearty dinner in an inn at Exford. Placing his pistols before him, he made himself comfortable, and ate and drank his fill. By-and-by an old woman entered, and humbly took a seat in a corner far from the fire. In time the highwayman observed the wretched, shivering creature, and of his princely generosity told her to come and sit by the hearth. The old woman gladly obeyed, and crouched beside him. Presently, as he sat absorbed in his meal, his arms were suddenly pinioned from behind. The old woman had him tight, so that he could not use his weapons, while at a call constables, who had been posted about, rushed in and secured him. The old woman was in fact a man in disguise. A relation of the thief-taker still lives and tells the tale. The highwayman's mare, mentioned in the novel, had been trained to come at his call, and was so ungovernable that they shot her.

Richard Jefferies.

BUILDING THE HAY-RICK.

‘On the skirts of the common a farmer had almost completed
a great haystack.’



A SUBURBAN TOUR.

IT was nearly blood heat in the shade. Out of the south-west, slow, lambent blasts streaked the glowing air and shook the scent from the limes in the Duke's Avenue leading to Chiswick House. Chiswick Parish Church was as hot as a kiln. In Chiswick Mall the old houses, sunburned and blistered through their veils of jasmine and clematis, opened all their windows for a breath of air. Chiswick eyot, bristling with osiers like a gigantic green clothes-brush, sighed—if a brush may be supposed to sigh—stifled with scalding dust. The tepid Thames slid down its greasy channel, twisting and untwisting in surface eddies interlinked athwart and along, a dark ravelled skein, cut by thousands of keels and tangled by innumerable pro-pellers, paddles, oars, and dredgers; and the muddy banks, smooth and glossy, seemed melting away like butter—brown butter, churned out of the water by steamers, barges, and rowing boats. The sun flamed in a sky of molten turquoise.

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The itinerant crossed the Thames to visit the orchid-house in Kew Gardens. Orchids have a great fascination for him, as for most people. Mysterious creatures, living mostly on dew, they are the artists of the botanic world ; their moods are many and various ; their temperaments master them. Tranquil, chaotic, like the great poet Carlyle saw sitting among his dead dogs, they never know what they are going to do until their flowers come forth. As Bottom would fain have been everybody, so the orchid aims at being all flowers. It is a mere temperament without intellect, and sometimes endeavours to reproduce shapes and hues with which it has no native sympathy.

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The terrible temperaments of these tropical flowers began to exercise a spell on the itinerant, and he was glad to escape from their sorcery, and the moist enervating air they breathed. Outside the danger was only one of roasting, an operation which does not necessarily destroy the shape ; in the orchid-house he felt as if he were about to be stewed out of all consistence, and transformed into a pulpy plant growing on a board. But he was too hot to walk immediately so he took train to Acton. There he found himself once more in a dreadful suburban region that seemed to be limitless, except towards the east. . . .

By Horn Lane and past Old Oak Common he came to Willesden Junction. Glimpses of Middlesex, wooded

and undulating, appeared on the left, stretching out to the horizon and sweltering under the heat and the haze. On the skirts of the common a farmer had almost completed a great hay-stack—sixty feet high, he said.

‘Is there so much hay in the world this season?’ asked the itinerant.

‘You may well say it,’ he replied. ‘If you want to speculate, buy hay. Already it’s double the usual price, and next spring it will be selling for its weight in gold.’

‘Was this stack all grown in the neighbourhood?’

‘Yes in these half-dozen fields.’

They were well within the six-mile radius—Wormwood Scrubs barely half-a-mile away; and the itinerant saw, or thought he saw, nearer London towards the north-east, the white monuments of Kensal Green.

‘Is suburban hay good?’ he asked.

‘Smell it,’ said the farmer, giving him a handful.

It had, indeed, a delightful smell, like that of new milk with the faintest aroma of spice.

‘That,’ continued the farmer, ‘is the best hay I ever reaped. The dryer the season the finer the hay; but that’s no compensation for quantity. Last year I had more than three times as much hay from the same fields. I required more than half of it myself, so I’ll have to buy fodder this year.’

The prospect seemed to dismay him little, however. He wished the itinerant a cheery good-day, and told him to be sure to come and draw his stack and the old

farm-house when the former was finished. The itinerant was pleased to be mistaken for a painter.

John Davidson.

THE GLEANERS AT THE STILE.

‘You may dally as long as you like by the roadside.’



WALKING TOURS.

AND you would be astonished if I were to tell you all the grave and learned heads that have confessed to me that, when on walking tours, they sang—and sang very ill—and had a pair of red ears when, as described above, the inauspicious peasant plumped into their arms from round a corner. And here, lest you should think I am exaggerating, is Hazlitt's own confession, from his essay *On Going a Journey*, which is so good that there should be a tax levied on all who have not read it :—

‘Give me the clear blue sky over my head,’ says he, ‘and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours’ march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy.’

Bravo! After that adventure of my friend with the policeman, you would not have cared, would you, to publish that in the first person? But we have no

bravery nowadays, and, even in books, must all pretend to be as dull and foolish as our neighbours. It was not so with Hazlitt. And notice how learned he is (as, indeed, throughout the essay) in the theory of walking tours. He is none of your athletic men in purple stockings, who walk their fifty miles a day: three hours' march is his ideal. And then he must have a winding road, the epicure!

Nor must I forget to say a word on bivouacs. You come to a milestone on a hill, or some place where deep ways meet under trees; and off goes the knapsack, and down you sit to smoke a pipe in the shade. You sink into yourself, and the birds come round and look at you; and your smoke dissipates upon the afternoon under the blue dome of heaven; and the sun lies warm upon your feet, and the cool air visits your neck and turns aside your open shirt. If you are not happy, you must have an evil conscience. You may dally as long as you like by the roadside. It is almost as if the millennium were arrived, when we shall throw our clocks and watches over the housetop, and remember time and seasons no more. Not to keep hours for a lifetime is, I was going to say, to live for ever. You have no idea, unless you have tried it, how endlessly long is a summer's day, that you measure out only by hunger, and bring to an end only when you are drowsy. I know a village where there are hardly any clocks, where no one knows more of the

days of the week than by a sort of instinct for the fête on Sunday, and where only one person can tell you the day of the month, and she is generally wrong ; and if people were aware how slow Time journeyed in that village, and what armfuls of spare hours he gives, over and above the bargain, to its wise inhabitants, I believe there would be a stampede out of London, Liverpool, Paris, and a variety of large towns, where the clocks lose their heads, and shake the hours out each one faster than the other, as though they were all in a wager. And all these foolish pilgrims would each bring his own misery along with him, in a watch-pocket. It is to be noticed, there were no clocks and watches in the much vaunted days before the flood. It follows, of course, there were no appointments, and punctuality was not yet thought upon. 'Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure,' says Milton, 'he has yet one jewel left ; ye cannot deprive him of his covetousness.' And so I would say of a modern man of business, you may do what you will for him, put him in Eden, give him the elixir of life—he has still a flaw at heart, he has still his business habits. Now, there is no time when business habits are more mitigated than on a walking tour. And so during these halts, as I say, you will feel almost free.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

THE LITTLE ANGLERS.

‘VENATOR : . . . and let the blessing of St. Peter's Master be with mine.

PISCATOR : And upon all that are lovers of virtue, and dare trust in his providence, and be quiet, and go a-Angling.—“Study to be quiet.”’



THE GRATEFUL ANGLERS.

Pisc. Trust me, Scholar, I thank you heartily for these verses: they be choicely good, and doubtless made by a lover of Angling. Come, now, drink a glass to me, and I will requite you with another very good copy: it is a Farewell to the Vanities of the World, and some say, written by Sir Harry Wotton, who I told you was an excellent Angler. But let them be writ by whom they will, he that writ them had a brave soul, and must needs be possessed with happy thoughts at the time of their composure.

‘ I would be great,—but that the sun doth still
Level his rays against the rising hill:
I would be high,—but see the proudest oak
Most subject to the rending thunder-stroke:
I would be rich,—but see men, too unkind,
Dig in the bowels of the richest mind:
I would be wise,—but that I often see
The fox suspected, whilst the ass goes free:
I would be fair,—but see the fair and proud,
Like the bright sun, oft setting in a cloud:

RUSTIC LANDSCAPE.

I would be poor,—but know the humble grass
 Still trampled on by each unworthy ass :
 Rich, hated ; Wise, suspected ; Scorned if poor ;
 Great, feared ; Fair, tempted ; High, still envied more :
 I have wished all ; but now I wish for neither ;
 Great, High, Rich, Wise, nor Fair ; Poor I'll be rather.

‘ Welcome, pure thoughts ! Welcome, ye silent groves !
 These guests, these courts, my soul most dearly loves.
 Now the winged people of the sky shall sing
 My cheerful anthems to the gladsome spring :
 A prayer-book now shall be my looking-glass,
 In which I will adore sweet Virtue's face.
 Here dwell no hateful looks, no palace-cares,
 No broken vows dwell here, nor pale-faced fears :
 Then here I'll sit, and sigh my hot love's folly,
 And learn t' affect an holy melancholy :
 And if Contentment be a stranger, then
 I'll ne'er look for it, but in heaven again.’

VEN. Well, Master, these verses be worthy to keep
 a room in every man's memory. I thank you for
 them ; and I thank you for your many instructions,
 which, God willing, I will not forget. And as St.
 Austin, in his Confessions, Book IV. Chap. 3, com-
 memorates the kindness of his friend Verecundus, for
 lending him and his companion a country-house,
 because there they rested and enjoyed themselves free
 from the troubles of the world ; so, having had the
 like advantage, both by your conversation and the Art
 you have taught me, I ought ever to do the like : for
 indeed, your company and discourse have been so

useful and pleasant, that I may truly say, I have only lived since. I enjoyed them and turned Angler, and not before. Nevertheless, here I must part with you, here in this now sad place, where I was so happy as first to meet you : but I shall long for the 9th of May, for then I hope again to enjoy your beloved company at the appointed time and place. And now I wish for some somniferous potion, that might force me to sleep away the intermitted time, which will pass away with me as tediously as it does with men in sorrow ; nevertheless I will make it as short as I can, by my hopes and wishes. And my good Master, I will not forget the doctrine which you told me Socrates taught his scholars, that they should not think to be honored so much for being philosophers, as to honor philosophy by their virtuous lives. You advised me to the like concerning Angling, and I will endeavour to do so, and to live like those many worthy men, of which you made mention in the former part of your discourse. This is my firm resolution. And as a pious man advised his friend, that, to beget mortification, he should frequent churches, and view monuments, and charnel-houses, and then and there consider, how many dead bones Time had piled up at the gates of Death : so when I would beget content, and increase confidence in the power, and wisdom, and providence of Almighty God, I will walk the meadows by some gliding stream, and there contemplate the lilies that take no care, and those very many other various little

living creatures, that are not only created, but fed, man knows not how, by the goodness of the God of nature, and therefore trust in him. This is my purpose ; and so, 'Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord' : and let the blessing of St. Peter's Master be with mine.

Pisc. And upon all that are lovers of virtue, and dare trust in his providence, and be quiet, and go a-Angling.

'STUDY TO BE QUIET. —I Thes. iv. ii.

Izaak Walton.

THE DIPPING PLACE.

‘It occurred to me clearly for the first time that the river came from far, and went yet farther, that it was not confined to the fields about my house, and that this little scene was not a solitary gem, but one only of a thousand links in a long chain of various and unimagined beauty’



THE UNKNOWN RIVER.

THERE is no rest to faculties wearied by labour like rest by a quiet stream, on a beautiful afternoon in summer. If you distribute your work wisely, and are fortunate enough to have work of a kind that may be done at your own hours, you will take care, when the days are long, to reserve some considerable part of the afternoon as sacred to utter idleness, and if a quiet stream is within easy distance, there will you go and rest. Most men under such circumstances take a rod and fish, but it does not always happen that there is anything which the dignity of manhood may avow an interest in catching. The man who rents a salmon river in Scotland, or even the Englishman whose trout stream is well preserved, may go forth with the implements of the angler and a consciousness of noble aims. But can anybody past boyhood pretend to take an interest in catching minnows, unless, indeed, he be a Frenchman who has just landed a *goujon*, and is vain of the exploit?

It is curious how capable we all are of seeing people and things every day of our lives without being once prompted to ascertain anything further about them, whence they come, whither they go, what their past has been, or what may be reserved for them in the future. The inhabitants of great cities being satiated by the continual sight of innumerable persons and things, have this indifference in the most strongly developed form, but it may be observed in the country with regard to what is most commonly seen there. For instance, brooks and streams are very commonly met with in all northern countries, and therefore very few people ever give a thought to the geography of them, or have anything beyond a very vague and general notion of their course. The inhabitants of the region through which the stream passes usually know it at bridges and fords, and farmers know where it eats away the land, and where, in times of flood, it is most likely to leave a deposit of sand and pebbles; the angler, too, may have followed it for a few miles, and some professional landscape-painter or amateur may have explored a few of its most picturesque parts. But no man living knows the whole stream, and so there is always a great mystery about it, and any one who cares to follow its course faithfully may enjoy all the keen delights, and feel all the unceasing interest, which belong to a true exploration.

In this especial sense our little river is indeed unknown, and as I lay idly on its bank on that bright

autumn afternoon, it occurred to me clearly for the first time that the river came from far and went yet farther, that it was not confined to the fields about my house, and that this little scene was not a solitary gem, but one only of a thousand links in a long chain of various and unimagined beauty.

Why had not this been equally clear to me years before? Why do we dream ever in one place, or travel by the same weary old roads, when infinite beauty and novelty are open to us? It is because the beauty and the novelty are so *very* near to us that we miss them, and often so cheap that our pitiful small dignity despises them as something puerile. When we are weary of the monotony of life, and the whole human organism longs for the refreshment of change, we would go to the end of the earth, and in order to defeat our purposes as completely as possible, carry our habits with us. We are accustomed to railways and newspapers, to bitter ale and sweet tea, and we seek these things, and a thousand others that habit has rendered necessary, wherever on earth we go. And yet change more refreshing, and novelty more complete are here within one day of slowest travel, than in journeys to Berlin and Vienna, for the truest change and best novelty are not in length of travel but in the abandonment of habit, and especially in the zest of free and personal discovery.

P. G. Hamerton.

THE WOOD-WAIN.

In an opening of the woods.



THE ABBOT'S WAYS.

THE kinds of people Abbot Samson liked worst were these three : '*Mendaces, ebriosi, verbosi*, Liars, drunkards and wordy or windy persons ;'—not good kinds, any of them ! He also much condemned 'persons given to murmur at their meat or drink, especially Monks of that disposition.' We remark, from the very first, his strict anxious order to his servants to provide handsomely for hospitality, to guard 'above all things that there be no shabbiness 'in the matter of meat and drink ; no look of mean 'parsimony, *in novitate meâ*, at the beginning of my 'Abbotship ;' and to the last he maintains a due opulence of table and equipment for others ; but he is himself in the highest degree indifferent to all such things.

'Sweet milk, honey and other naturally sweet kinds 'of food, were what he preferred to eat : but he had 'this virtue,' says Jocelin, 'he never changed the dish '*(ferculum)* you set before him, be what it might.

‘Once when I, still a novice, happened to be waiting
‘table in the refectory, it came into my head’ (rogue
‘that I was!) ‘to try if this were true; and I thought
‘I would place before him a *ferculum* that would
‘have displeased any other person, the very platter
‘being black and broken. But he, seeing it, was as
‘one that saw it not: and now some little delay
‘taking place, my heart smote me that I had done
‘this; and so, snatching up the platter (*discus*), I
‘changed both it and its contents for a better, and
‘put down that instead; which emendation he was
‘angry at, and rebuked me for,—the stoical monastic
man! ‘For the first seven years he had commonly
‘four sorts of dishes on his table; afterwards only
‘three, except it might be presents, or venison from
‘his own parks, or fishes from his ponds. And if, at
‘any time, he had guests living in his house at the
‘request of some great person, or of some friend, or
‘had public messengers, or had harpers (*citharædos*),
‘or any one of that sort, he took the first opportunity
‘of shifting to another of his Manor-houses, and so
‘got rid of such superfluous individuals,’ — very
prudently, I think.

As to his parks, of these, in the general repair of
buildings, general improvement and adornment of the
St. Edmund Domains, ‘he had laid out several, and
‘stocked them with animals, retaining a proper hunts-
‘man with hounds: and, if any guest of great quality
‘were there, our Lord Abbot with his Monks would

‘sit in some opening of the woods, and see the dogs
‘run; but he himself never meddled with hunting,
‘that I saw.’

‘In an opening of the woods;’—for the country was still dark with wood in those days; and Scotland itself still rustled shaggy and leafy, like a damp black American Forest, with cleared spots and spaces here and there. Dryasdust advances several absurd hypotheses as to the insensible but almost total disappearance of these woods; the thick wreck of which now lies as *peat*, sometimes with huge heart-of-oak timberlogs imbedded in it, on many a height and hollow. The simplest reason doubtless is, that by increase of husbandry, there was increase of cattle; increase of hunger for green spring food; and so, more and more, the new seedlings got yearly eaten out in April; and the old trees, having only a certain length of life in them, died gradually, no man heeding it, and disappeared into *peat*.

A sorrowful waste of noble wood and umbrage! Yes,—but a very common one; the course of most things in this world. Monachism itself, so rich and fruitful once, is now all rotted into *peat*; lies sleek and buried,—and a most feeble bog-grass of Diletantism all the crop we reap from it! That also was frightful waste; perhaps among the saddest our England ever saw. Why will men destroy noble Forests, even when in part a nuisance, in such reck-

less manner ; turning loose four-footed cattle and Henry-the-Eighths into them ! The fifth part of our English soil, Dryasdust computes, lay consecrated to 'spiritual uses,' better or worse ; solemnly set apart to foster spiritual growth and culture of the soul, by the methods then known : and now—it too, like the four-fifths, fosters what ? Gentle shepherd, tell me what !

Thomas Carlyle.

THE LOCK.

‘I was nervous about our first lock.’



THE FIRST LOCK.

SAFE under our shelter, we could enjoy all the beauty of the grey day—the richness of the masses of wet foliage, the softness of the distant trees and fields under their veil of rain, the swaying of the tall poplars in the wind ; while the patter patter of the rain on our canvas roof made an accompaniment to the low roar of the near lasher and the rippling of the water against the boat.

I should have been willing to stay there for the rest of the day. I was nervous about our first lock. The river was high after long-continued rains, and for two people who knew nothing about boats and could not swim, the Thames journey with such a stream running was not promising. Already we could hear the noise of the water tumbling over the dam. Then we could see the strong current of the mill race sweeping in a swift-rushing funnel, ready to carry us with it. It looked dangerous, and indeed it is, if you get caught in it. Only the day before, a poor little boy had been

drowned here. Now, we were glad to find the lock gates open, so that there was no occasion to hang on to the muddy banks. J—— put his sculls in deep, giving strong but uncertain digs, and pulled them out with a jerk, mindful of Mr. Bouncer's counsel: I cannot call his frantic efforts of those first days sculling. But the lock-keeper, as in the time of Tom Brown, was equal to the occasion. He came out, smoking his pipe with enviable indifference, seized our bow with his long boat-hook, and pulled us into the lock. The great upper gates were slowly closed, he opened the lower sluices, and the water began to fall. At this point, we had been warned, comes one of the dangers of the river journey. For if you lose control of your boat, it drifts across the lock, as happened to Tom Brown on his memorable first row on the river. And even if you keep it close to the side of the lock, if bow or stern catch on the slippery beams or posts found in some locks, especially in old ones, the water, rising or falling, turns you over at once. In fact, it is remarkably easy to upset in a lock, and as difficult to get out again. But then there is absolutely no necessity to upset, and that we were not drowned shows that with ordinary common sense and a little bit of prudence all danger can be avoided.

While the water ran out, the lock-keeper came and gave us that curious literary production, a Thames Lock Ticket. It admits you 'through, by, or over the lock or weir' for threepence. That is, I suppose,

you can go through the lock in Christian fashion, drown under the weir, push and pull over the roller if there is one, or drag your boat round by the shore ; but whether you come out dead or alive, for any of these privileges the Thames Conservancy will have its threepence.

Elizabeth Pennell.

THE SMITHY.

‘There was the pleasant tinkle of the blacksmith’s anvil, the patient cart-horses waiting at his door.’



STAGE-COACH DAYS.

IN those days there were pocket boroughs, a Birmingham unrepresented in Parliament and compelled to make strong representations out of it, unrepealed corn-laws, three-and-sixpenny letters, a brawny and many-breeding pauperism, and other departed evils ; but there were some pleasant things too, which have also departed. *Non omnia grandior ætas quæ fugiamus habet*, says the wise goddess : you have not the best of it in all things, O youngsters ! the elderly man has his enviable memories, and not the least of them is the memory of a long journey in mid-spring or autumn on the outside of a stage-coach. Posterity may be shot, like a bullet through a tube, by atmospheric pressure from Winchester to Newcastle : that is a fine result to have among our hopes ; but the slow old-fashioned way of getting from one end of our country to the other is the better thing to have in the memory. The tube-journey can never lend much to picture and narrative ; it is as barren as an exclamatory

O! Whereas the happy outside passenger seated on the box from the dawn to the gloaming gathered enough stories of English life, enough of English labours in town and country, enough aspects of earth and sky, to make episodes for a modern Odyssey. Suppose only that his journey took him through that central plain, watered at one extremity by the Avon, at the other by the Trent. As the morning silvered the meadows with their long lines of bushy willows marking the watercourses, or burnished the golden corn-ricks clustered near the long roofs of some mid-land homestead, he saw the full-uddered cows driven from their pasture to the early milking. Perhaps it was the shepherd, head-servant of the farm, who drove them, his sheep-dog following with a heedless unofficial air as of a beadle in undress. The shepherd with a slow and slouching walk, timed by the walk of grazing beasts, moved aside, as if unwillingly, throwing out a monosyllabic hint to his cattle; his glance, accustomed to rest on things very near the earth, seemed to lift itself with difficulty to the coachman. Mail or stage coach for him belonged to that mysterious distant system of things called 'Gover'nment,' which, whatever it might be, was no business of his, any more than the most out-lying nebula or the coal-sacks of the southern hemisphere: his solar system was the parish; the master's temper and the casualties of lambing-time were his region of storms.

But there were trim cheerful villages too, with a

neat or handsome parsonage and grey church set in the midst ; there was the pleasant tinkle of the blacksmith's anvil, the patient cart-horses waiting at his door ; the basket-maker peeling his willow wands in the sunshine ; the wheelwright putting the last touch to a blue cart with red wheels ; here and there a cottage with bright transparent windows showing pots full of blooming balsams or geraniums, and little gardens in front all double daisies or dark wallflowers ; at the well, clean and comely women carrying yoked buckets, and towards the free school small Britons dawdling on, and handling their marbles in the pockets of unpatched corduroys adorned with brass buttons. The land around was rich and marly, great cornstacks stood in the rick-yards—for the rick-burners had not found their way hither ; the homesteads were those of rich farmers who paid no rent, or had the rare advantage of a lease, and could afford to keep their corn till prices had risen.

George Eliot.

THE FARM-YARD.

. . . . 'tis not th' extent
Of Land makes life, but sweet content.'



THE COUNTRY LIFE.

SWEET Country life, to such unknown,
Whose lives are others', not their own!
But serving Courts, and Cities, be
Less happy, less enjoying thee.
Thou never Plow'st the Ocean's foame
To seek, and bring rough Pepper home :
Nor to the Eastern Ind dost rove
To bring from thence the scorched Clove.
Nor, with the losse of thy lov'd rest,
Bring'st home the Ingot from the West.
No, thy Ambition's Master-piece
Flies no thought higher than a fleece :
Or how to pay thy Hinds, and cleere
All scores ; and so to end the yeere :
But walk'st about thine own dear bounds,
Not envying others larger grounds :
For well thou know'st, *'tis not th' extent
Of Land makes life, but sweet content.*
When now the Cock (the Plow-man's Horne)
Calls forth the lilly-wristed Morne ;

Then to thy corn-fields thou dost goe,
Which though well soyl'd, yet thou dost know
That the best compost for the Lands
Is the wise Masters Feet, and Hands.
There at the Plough thou find'st thy Teame,
With a Hind whistling there to them :
And cheer'st them up, by singing how
The Kingdoms portion is *the Plow*.
This done, then to th' enameld Meads
Thou go'st, and as thy foot there treads,
Thou seest a present God-like Power
Imprinted in each Herbe and Flower :
And smell'st the breath of great-ey'd Kine,
Sweet as the blossomes of the Vine.
Here thou behold'st thy large sleek Neat
Unto the Dew-laps up in meat :
And, as thou look'st, the wanton Steere,
The Heifer, Cow, and Oxe draw neere
To make a pleasing pastime there.
These seen, thou go'st to view thy flocks
Of sheep, (safe from the Wolfe and Fox)
And find'st their bellies there as full
Of short sweet grasse, as backs with wool.
And leav'st them (as they feed and fill)
A Shepherd piping on a hill.
For Sports, for Pagentrie, and Playes,
Thou hast thy Eves, and Holydayes :
On which the young men and maids meet,
To exercise their dancing feet :

Tripping the comely country Round,
With Daffadils and Daisies crown'd.
Thy Wakes, thy Quintels, here thou hast,
Thy May-poles too with Garlands grac't ;
Thy Morris-dance ; thy Whitsun-ale ;
Thy Sheering-feast, which never faile.
Thy Harvest home ; thy Wassaille bowle,
That's tost up after Fox i' th' Hole.
Thy Mummeries ; thy Twelfe-tide Kings
And Queenes ; thy Christmas revellings :
Thy Nut-browne mirth ; thy Russet wit ;
And no man payes too deare for it.
To these, thou hast thy times to goe
And trace the Hare i' th' trecherous Snow :
Thy witty wiles to draw, and get
The Larke into the Trammell net :
Thou hast thy Cockrood, and thy Glade
To take the precious Phesant made :
Thy Lime-twigs, Snares, and Pit-falls then
To catch the pilfring Birds, not Men.
O happy life ! if that their good
The Husbandmen but understood !
Who all the day themselves doe please,
And Younglings, with such sports as these.
And, lying down, have nought t' affright
Sweet sleep, that makes more short the night.

Robert Herrick.

THE OLD CHAIR-MENDER AT
THE COTTAGE DOOR.

‘England is like a seat by the chimney-corner, and is as redolent
of human occupancy and domesticity.’



ENGLAND.

ENGLAND is not a country of granite and marble, but of chalk, marl, and clay. The old Plutonic gods do not assert themselves; they are buried and turned to dust, and the more modern humanistic divinities bear sway. The land is a green cemetery of extinct rude forces. Where the highway or the railway gashed the hills deeply, I could seldom tell where the soil ended and the rock began, as they gradually assimilated, blended, and became one.

And this is the key to nature in England: 'tis granite grown ripe and mellow, and issuing in grass and verdure; 'tis aboriginal force and fecundity become docile and equable, and mounting toward higher forms,—the harsh, bitter rind of the earth grown sweet and edible. There is such body and substance in the colour and presence of things that one thinks the very roots of the grass must go deeper than usual. The crude, the raw, the discordant, where are they? It seems a comparatively short and easy

step from nature to the canvas or to the poem in this cosy land. Nothing need be added ; the idealisation has already taken place. The Old World is deeply covered with a kind of human leaf-mould, while the New is for the most part yet raw, undigested hard-pan. This is why these scenes haunt one like a memory. One seems to have youthful associations with every field and hill-top he looks upon. The complete humanisation of nature has taken place. The soil has been mixed with human thought and substance. These fields have been alternately Celt, Roman, British, Norman, Saxon ; they have moved and walked and talked and loved and suffered ; hence one feels kindred to them and at home among them. The mother-land, indeed. Every foot of its soil has given birth to a human being and grown tender and conscious with time.

England is like a seat by the chimney-corner, and is as redolent of human occupancy and domesticity. It has the island cosiness and unity and the island simplicity as opposed to the continental diversity of forms. It is all one neighbourhood ; a friendly and familiar air is over all. It satisfies to the full one's utmost craving for the home-like and for the fruits of affectionate occupation of the soil. It does not satisfy one's cravings for the wild, the savage, the aboriginal, what our poet describes as his

‘Hungering, hungering, hungering, for primal energies
and Nature's dauntlessness.’

But probably in the matter of natural scenes we hunger most for that which we most do feed upon. At any rate, I can conceive that one might be easily contented with what the English landscape affords him.

The whole physiognomy of the land bespeaks the action of slow, uniform, conservative agencies. There is an elemental composure and moderation in things that leave their mark everywhere,—a sort of elemental sweetness and docility that are a surprise and a charm. One does not forget that the evolution of man probably occurred in this hemisphere, and time would seem to have proved that there is something here more favourable to his perpetuity and longevity.

John Burroughs.

THE HAY-FIELD.

‘In the foreground was a waggon piled with hay, surrounded by the Farmer and his fine family,—some pitching, some loading, some raking after, all intent on their pleasant business.’



HAY-CARRYING.

HER new inmate, who, without positively declining to give his name, had, yet, contrived to evade all the questions Mrs. Kent could devise, proved a perpetual source of astonishment, both to herself and her neighbours.

He was a well-made little man, near upon forty ; with considerable terseness of feature, a forehead of great power, whose effect was increased by a slight baldness on the top of the head, and an eye like a falcon. Such an eye ! It seemed to go through you—to strike all that it looked upon, like a *coup-de-soleil*. Luckily, the stranger was so merciful as, generally, to wear spectacles ; under cover of which those terrible eyes might see, and be seen, without danger.

His habits were as peculiar as his appearance. He was moderate, and rather fanciful, in his diet ; drank nothing but water, or strong coffee, made, as Mrs. Kent observed, very wastefully ; and had, as she also remarked, a great number of heathenish-looking

books scattered about the apartment—Lord Berners's Froissart, for instance, Sir Thomas Browne's Urn Burial, the Baskerville Ariosto,—Goethe's Faust,—a Spanish Don Quixote,—and an interleaved Philoctetes, full of outline drawings. The greater part of his time was spent out of doors.—He would, even, ramble away, for three or four days together, with no other companion than a boy, hired in the village, to carry what Mrs. Kent denominated his odds and ends; which odds and ends consisted, for the most part, of an angling rod and a sketching apparatus—our incognito being, as my readers have, by this time, probably discovered, no other than an artist, on his summer progress.

Robert speedily understood the stranger, and was delighted with the opportunity of approaching so gifted a person; although he contemplated, with a degree of generous envy, which a king's regalia would have failed to excite in his bosom, those *chef d'œuvres* of all nations, which were to him as 'sealed books,' and the pencils, whose power seemed to him little less than creative. He redoubled his industry in the garden, that he might, conscientiously, devote hours and half-hours to pointing out the deep pools and shallow eddies of their romantic stream, where he knew, from experience, (for Robert, amongst his other accomplishments, was no mean 'brother of the angle,') that fish were likely to be found; and, better still, he loved to lead to the haunts of his childhood,

the wild bosky dells, and the sunny ends of lanes, where a sudden turn in the track, an overhanging tree, an old gate, a cottage chimney, and a group of cattle or children, had, sometimes, formed a picture, on which his mind had fed for hours.

It was Robert's chief pleasure to entice his lodger to scenes such as these, and to see his own visions growing into reality, under the glowing pencil of the artist; and he, in his turn, would admire, and marvel at, the natural feeling of the beautiful, which could lead an uninstructed country-youth instinctively to the very elements of the picturesque. A general agreement of taste had brought about a degree of association unusual between persons so different in rank: a particular instance of this accordance dissolved the intimacy.

Robert had been, for above a fortnight, more than commonly busy in Mr. Lescombe's gardens and hot-houses, so busy that he even slept at the hall; the stranger, on the other hand, had been, during the same period, shut up, painting, in the little parlour. At last they met; and the artist invited his young friend to look at the picture, which had engaged him during his absence. On walking into the room he saw on the easel a picture in oils, almost finished. The style was of that delightful kind, which combines figures with landscape, the subject was hay-carrying; and the scene, that very sloping meadow,—crowned by Farmer Bell's tall irregular house, its vine-

wreathed porch, and chimneys, the great walnut-tree before the door, the orchard and the homestead—which formed the actual prospect from the windows before them. In the foreground was a waggon piled with hay, surrounded by the Farmer and his fine family,—some pitching, some loading, some raking after, all intent on their pleasant business. The only disengaged persons in the field were young Mary Kent and Harry Bell, an urchin of four years old, who rode on her knee on the top of the waggon, crowned and wreathed with garlands of vine-leaves, and bind-weed, and poppies, and corn-flowers. In the front, looking up at Mary Kent and her little brother, and playfully tossing to them the lock of hay which she had gathered on her rake, stood Susan Bell, her head thrown back, her bonnet half off, her light and lovely figure shown, in all its grace, by the pretty attitude and the short cool dress; while her sweet face, glowing with youth and beauty, had a smile playing over it, like a sunbeam. The boy was nodding and laughing to her, and seemed longing—as well he might—to escape from his flowery bondage, and jump into her arms. Never had poet framed a lovelier image of rural beauty! Never had painter more felicitously realized his conception!

Mary Russell Mitford.

THE GREEN LANE.

‘Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours’ march to dinner—and then to thinking!’



ON GOING A JOURNEY.

ONE of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey ; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room ; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

‘The fields his study, nature was his book.’

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country, I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedge-rows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room, and fewer encumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude ; nor do I ask for

——‘a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet.’

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

‘May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair’d,’

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a postchaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours’ march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud, I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sun-burnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like ‘sunken wrack and sumless treasures,’ burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts

at wit or dull common-places, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do ; but I sometimes had rather be without them. 'Leave, oh, leave me to my repose !' I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me 'very stuff o' the conscience.' Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment ? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald ? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far distant horizon ? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. 'Out upon such half-faced fellowship,' say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others ; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's, that 'he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time.' So I cannot

talk and think, or indulge in melancholy musing and lively conversation by fits and starts. 'Let me have a companion of my way,' says Sterne, 'were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines.' It is beautifully said: but in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of nature without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. I am for this synthetical method on a journey in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomise them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet.

William Hazlitt.

THE WIND-MILL.

‘A mill stood up forlorn, its arms shivering idly in the wind.’



AMONG THE CHILTERNs.

AS the landlady had predicted the itinerant came shortly to a highway, across which he found another gate on the latch. He had been ascending all the time, and had now come to the brow of the hill, among larches and birches hanging with soft green. Higher up he reached a grove of beeches. The old trees had fluted stems, knobs where the sap had boiled over, and long intertwining branches, as if they stood embraced and ready for the dance—listening for the word or note to dissolve the spell that held them root-bound. In the case of the younger ones, tall and graceful, their branches hanging easily about them, the spell had evidently been already dissolved ; but they, too, were waiting—perhaps to choose partners, or for the old ones to lead off, or on account of some whim ; but the charm will be wrought again before they can make up their minds to trip off down the hill and see the world ; and the axe may be their sole disenchanter, at a time, too, when it would content

them just to be conscious of the sap rising in the spring, to be assured that they are only not dead.

Behind the beeches lay a field on whose dimpled slopes, covered with the downy green of the springing corn, the brown earth was visible like the cheek of a young man through an unrazored beard. Towards Aldbury there was ploughed land on the hill-sides, which the itinerant surveyed with much curiosity, as he had never been on a chalk escarpment before. Some of the fields were as white as a leper, some only buff-coloured, and in some again the brown earth was streaked and pied with stripes and blotches of white soil—very curious and artificial looking when seen for the first time. To the north-west the view was uninterrupted far across Buckinghamshire, a rolling plain, rich with England's best. In Wendover a mill stood up forlorn, its arms shivering idly in the wind; it seemed to look out across the fields tinged with the green of the coming harvest—not so forlornly, either; hopefully rather, if with a little anxiety, there will surely be work for the wind and it yet. But the mill must have sighed to itself, for there was such a magnificent steady east blowing, like the strong flight of a flock of birds, and knowing no lull in the plain. On the hill it rose and fell, and sighed and roared among the beeches with the sound of November in its voice, but summer in its breath, drunk with weeks of level sunshine. On the surges of its deafening chant, like crests of foam on the waves, or lightning glancing on

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a soaring cloud, the lofty notes of the tireless larks
sparkled and shone, tongues of flame in the storm of
sound.

John Davidson.

OLD COTTAGES.

‘These humble dwellings remind the contemplative spectator of a
production of Nature.’



LAKE DWELLINGS.

THE cottages are scattered over the valleys, and under the hill-sides, and on the rocks ; and, even to this day, in the more retired dales, without any intrusion of more assuming buildings ;

Cluster'd like stars some few, but single most,
And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
Or glancing on each other cheerful looks,
Like separated stars with clouds between.—MS.

The dwelling-houses, and contiguous outhouses, are, in many instances, of the colour of the native rock, out of which they have been built ; but, frequently the Dwelling or Fire-house, as it is ordinarily called, has been distinguished from the barn or byre by rough-cast and white-wash, which, as the inhabitants are not hasty in renewing it, in a few years acquires, by the influence of weather, a tint at once sober and variegated. As these houses have been, from father to son, inhabited by persons engaged in the same

occupations, yet necessarily with changes in their circumstances, they have received without incongruity additions and accommodations adapted to the needs of each successive occupant, who, being for the most part proprietor, was at liberty to follow his own fancy : so that these humble dwellings remind the contemplative spectator of a production of Nature, and may (using a strong expression) rather be said to have grown than to have been erected ;—to have risen, by an instinct of their own, out of the native rock—so little is there in them of formality, such is their wildness and beauty. Among the numerous recesses and projections in the walls and in the different stages of their roofs, are seen bold and harmonious effects of contrasted sunshine and shadow. It is a favourable circumstance, that the strong winds, which sweep down the valleys, induced the inhabitants, at a time when the materials for building were easily procured, to furnish many of these dwellings with substantial porches ; and such as have not this defence, are seldom unprovided with a projection of two large slates over their thresholds. Nor will the singular beauty of the chimneys escape the eye of the attentive traveller. Sometimes a low chimney, almost upon a level with the roof, is overlaid with a slate, supported upon four slender pillars, to prevent the wind from driving the smoke down the chimney. Others are of a quadrangular shape, rising one or two feet above the roof ; which low square is often surmounted by a tall

cylinder, giving to the cottage chimney the most beautiful shape in which it is ever seen. Nor will it be too fanciful or refined to remark, that there is a pleasing harmony between a tall chimney of this circular form and the living column of smoke, ascending from it through the still air. These dwellings, mostly built, as has been said, of rough unhewn stone, are roofed with slates, which were rudely taken from the quarry before the present art of splitting them was understood, and are, therefore, rough and uneven in their surface, so that both the coverings and sides of the houses have furnished places of rest for the seeds of lichens, mosses, ferns, and flowers. Hence buildings, which in their very form call to mind the processes of Nature, do thus, clothed in part with a vegetable garb, appear to be received into the bosom of the living principle of things, as it acts and exists among the woods and fields ; and, by their colour and their shape, affectingly direct the thoughts to that tranquil course of Nature and simplicity, along which the humble-minded inhabitants have, through so many generations, been led. Add the little garden with its shed for bee-hives, its small bed of pot-herbs, and its borders and patches of flowers for Sunday posies, with sometimes a choice few too much prized to be plucked ; an orchard of proportioned size ; a cheese-press, often supported by some tree near the door ; a cluster of embowering sycamores for summer shade ; with a tall fir, through which the winds sing when other trees are leafless ;

the little rill or household spout murmuring in all seasons ;—combine these incidents and images together, and you have the representative idea of a mountain-cottage in this country so beautifully formed in itself, and so richly adorned by the hand of Nature.

William Wordsworth.

COWS IN THE POOL.

‘Hollows through which swollen yellowish streams meander, dank
meadows wherein fat kine browse and ruminate.’



ENGLISH LANDSCAPE.

THE landscape is always the same, consisting of meadows divided by hedgerows and large trees standing at intervals. The country is all verdure; one's eyes are surfeited and satiated with it, and this is the most powerful sentient impression which I have brought back from England. It is said that a view extending over forty miles in any direction can be had from the top of the extensive height which we are crossing; the prospect is a mass of green, there are no woods, only scattered clumps of trees, fields of beetroot, clover, hops, and peas; bushy parks; hollows through which swollen yellowish streams meander, dank meadows wherein fat kine browse and ruminant. Perennially fresh grass super-abounds; hence the large product of milk and meat; when contrasted with the bread, wine and vegetables which form the principal diet of our peasants, it will be seen that in this respect the Englishman resembles a Dutchman more closely than a Frenchman. A Paul Potter or a Ruysdael would find

subjects for pictures here. The over-cast sky is not lacking in beauty, but is filled with grey or blackish clouds moving slowly over a background of motionless vapour. At intervals on the horizon, the prospect is obscured by a shower and all these tints are softened and delicately and sadly commingled.

Our path lies across deserted wild commons where, at intervals, a lonely horse may be seen feeding. This is the primeval soil covered with furze and heath ; its bounds have been narrowed generation after generation, civilization having devoured it, like a flowing tide, and left merely fragments. How much toil has been expended in turning it into pasturage or a kitchen garden and how great the patience and effort required to convert it to man's use ! Those who laboured have succeeded, and every century since history began has seen thousands of acres of open common converted into enclosed fields. It looked better in its original state ; its thorny or wild herbs, its wan or dark colours and the hue of its flowers were more in keeping with the aspect of the sky. This reclaimed wilderness now bears too clearly the imprint of human industry ; there is too much regularity ; the colours are false or discordant ; the turnip leaves have a purplish or harsh green ; the feathery plants produce too dazzling or fleeting an effect in the sunshine, and one feels that they owe their presence to man and that their life is artificial. The country resembles a vast factory of fodder, the court-yard of a dairy or a slaughter-house,

and one declines from ideas of the picturesque to ideas of utility. Yet it must be admitted that, as man lives on mutton, the latter are equal to the former, and barren land rendered fruitful is a fine sight.

We took a country walk and passed through two villages; there was a downpour every two hours. This brings to mind the English saying: 'When it is fair carry your umbrella; when it rains, do as you please.' Yet the result of this humidity is lovely in the sunlight; the grass has a delicious freshness and novelty. The rain-drops rolling down it shine like pearls; an entire meadow glistens under a flash of sunshine and its train of yellow and white flowers seems transfused with light. The sky, however, remains flecked with clouds which, growing dark or violet hued, blend at a quarter of a league; there is a constant interchange between the moistened sky and the moistened earth and the contrast is very great between the vivid colour of the soil and the mixed tints of the atmosphere. One's eyes follow the varying colours and the vague motions of the general exhalation moving and breaking up along the hedgerows like a fragment of muslin. A gentle breeze bends and balances the foliage of the great trees, and one hears the soft sound of the drops pattering upon their pyramid.

H. A. Taine.

DONKEYS ON THE HEATH.

‘His good, rough, native, pine-apple coating.’



THE ASS.

MR. COLLIER, in his 'Poetical Decameron' (Third Conversation), notices a tract printed in 1595, with the author's initials only, A. B., entitled 'The Noblenesse of the Asse; a work rare, learned, and excellent.' He has selected the following pretty passage from it:—'He (the ass) refuseth no burden: he goes whither he is sent, without any contradiction. He lifts not his foote against any one; he bytes not; he is no fugitive, nor malicious affected. He doth all things in good sort, and to his liking that hath cause to employ him. If strokes be given him, he cares not for them; and, as our modern poet singeth,—

"Thou wouldst (perhaps) he should become thy foe,
And to that end dost beat him many times:
He cares not for himselfe, much less thy blow."

Certainly Nature, foreseeing the cruel usage which this useful servant to man should receive at man's hand, did prudently in furnishing him with a tegument

impervious to ordinary stripes. The malice of a child or a weak hand can make feeble impressions on him. His back offers no mark to a puny foeman. To a common whip or switch his hide presents an absolute insensibility. You might as well pretend to scourge a schoolboy with a tough pair of leather breeches on. His jerkin is well fortified; and therefore the costermongers, 'between the years 1790 and 1800,' did more politicly than piously in lifting up a part of his upper garment. I well remember that beastly and bloody custom. I have often longed to see one of those refiners in discipline himself at the cart's tail, with just such a convenient spot laid bare to the tender mercies of the whipster. But, since Nature has resumed her rights, it is to be hoped that this patient creature does not suffer to extremities; and that, to the savages who still belabour his poor carcass with their blows (considering the sort of anvil they are laid upon), he might in some sort, if he could speak, exclaim with the philosopher, 'Lay on: you beat but upon the case of Anaxarchus.'

Contemplating this natural safeguard, this fortified exterior, it is with pain I view the sleek, foppish, combed and curried person of this animal as he is disnaturalized at watering-places, &c., where they affect to make a palfrey of him. Fie on all such sophistications! It will never do, master groom. Something of his honest, shaggy exterior will still peep up in spite of you, his good, rough, native,

pine-apple coating. You cannot 'refine a scorpion into a fish, though you rinse it and scour it with ever so cleanly cookery.'

And truly, when one thinks on the suit of impenetrable armour with which Nature (like Vulcan to another Achilles) has provided him, these subtile enemies to *our* repose would have shown some dexterity in getting into *his* quarters. As the bogs of Ireland by tradition expel toads and reptiles, he may well defy these small deer in his fastnesses. It seems the latter had not arrived at the exquisite policy adopted by the human vermin 'between 1790 and 1800.'

But the most singular and delightful gift of the ass, according to the writer of this pamphlet, is his *voice*, the 'goodly, sweet, and continual brayings' of which, 'whereof they forme a melodious and proportionable kinde of musicke,' seems to have affected him with no ordinary pleasure. 'Nor thinke I,' he adds, 'that any of our immoderate musicians can deny but that their song is full of exceeding pleasure to be heard ; because therein is to be discerned both concord, discord, singing in the meane, the beginning to sing in large compasse, then following into rise and fall, the halfe-note, whole note, musicke of five voices, firme singing by four voices, three together, or one voice and a halfe. Then their variable contrarities amongst them, when one delivers forth a long tenor or a short, the pausing for time, breathing in measure, breaking the minim or very least moment of time. Last of all, to heare the musicke

of five or six voices chaunged to so many of asses is amongst them to heare a song of world without end.'

There is no accounting for ears, or for that laudable enthusiasm with which an author is tempted to invest a favourite subject with the most incompatible perfections. I should otherwise, for my own taste, have been inclined rather to have given a place to these extraordinary musicians at that banquet of nothing-less-than-sweet-sounds imagined by old Jeremy Collier (Essays, 1698, part ii. on Music,) where, after describing the inspiriting effects of martial music in a battle, he hazards an ingenious conjecture whether a sort of *anti-music* might not be invented, which should have quite the contrary effect of 'sinking the spirits, shaking the nerves, curdling the blood, and inspiring despair and cowardice and consternation. 'Tis probable,' he says, 'the roaring of lions, the warbling of cats and screech-owls, together with a mixture of the howling of dogs, judiciously imitated and compounded, might go a great way in this invention.' The dose, we confess, is pretty potent, and skilfully enough prepared. But what shall we say to the Ass of Silenus, who, if we may trust to classic lore, by his own proper sounds, without thanks to cat or screech-owl, dismayed and put to rout a whole army of giants? Here was *anti-music* with a vengeance; a whole *Pan-Dis-Harmonicon* in a single lungs of leather!

Charles Lamb.

THE COTTAGE ON THE BEACH.

‘England is anchored at the side of Europe, and right in the heart of the modern world.’



ENGLAND.

THE territory has a singular perfection. The climate is warmer by many degrees than it is entitled to by latitude. Neither hot nor cold, there is no hour in the whole year when one cannot work. Here is no winter, but such days as we have in Massachusetts in November, a temperature which makes no exhausting demand on human strength, but allows the attainment of the largest stature. Charles the Second said, 'it invited men abroad more days in the year and more hours in the day than any other country.' Then England has all the materials of a working country except wood. The constant rain,—a rain with every tide, in some parts of the island,—keeps its multitude of rivers full, and brings agricultural production up to the highest point. It has plenty of water, of stone, of potter's clay, of coal, of salt, and of iron. The land naturally abounds with game, immense heaths and downs are paved with quails, grouse, and woodcock, and the

shores are animated by water birds. The rivers and the surrounding sea spawn with fish ; there are salmon for the rich, and sprats and herrings for the poor. In the northern lochs, the herring are in innumerable shoals ; at one season, the country people say, the lakes contain one part water and two parts fish.

Factitious climate, factitious position. England resembles a ship in its shape, and, if it were one, its best admiral could not have worked it, or anchored it in a more judicious or effective position. Sir John Herschel said, 'London was the centre of the terrene globe.' The shopkeeping nation, to use a shop word, has a *good stand*. The old Venetians pleased themselves with the flattery, that Venice was in 45°, midway between the poles and the line ; as if that were an imperial centrality. Long of old, the Greeks fancied Delphi the navel of the earth, in their favourite mode of fabling the earth to be an animal. The Jews believed Jerusalem to be the centre. I have seen a kratometric chart designed to show that the city of Philadelphia was in the same thermic belt, and, by inference, in the same belt of empire, as the cities of Athens, Rome, and London. It was drawn by a patriotic Philadelphian, and was examined with pleasure, under his showing, by the inhabitants of Chestnut Street. But, when carried to Charleston, to New Orleans, and to Boston, it somehow failed to convince the ingenious scholars of all those capitals.

But England is anchored at the side of Europe, and right in the heart of the modern world. The sea, which, according to Virgil's famous line, divided the poor Britons utterly from the world, proved to be the ring of marriage with all nations. It is not down in the books,—it is written only in the geologic strata,—that fortunate day when a wave of the German Ocean burst the old isthmus which joined Kent and Cornwall to France, and gave to this fragment of Europe its impregnable sea wall, cutting off an island of eight hundred miles in length with an irregular breadth reaching to three hundred miles ; a territory large enough for independence enriched with every seed of national power, so near, that it can see the harvests of the continent ; and so far, that who would cross the strait must be an expert mariner, ready for tempests. As America, Europe, and Asia lie, these Britons have precisely the best commercial position in the whole planet, and are sure of a market for all the goods they can manufacture. And to make these advantages avail, the river Thames must dig its spacious outlet to the sea from the heart of the kingdom, giving road and landing to innumerable ships, and all the conveniency to trade, that a people so skilful and sufficient in economizing water-front by docks, warehouses, and lighters required. When James the First declared his purpose of punishing London by removing his Court, the Lord Mayor replied, 'that, in removing his royal presence from

his lieges, they hoped he would leave them the Thames.'

With its fruits, and wares, and money, must its civil influence radiate. It is a singular coincidence to this geographic centrality, the spiritual centrality, which Emanuel Swedenborg ascribes to the people. 'For the English nation, the best of them are in the centre of all Christians, because they have interior intellectual light. This appears conspicuously in the spiritual world. This light they derive from the liberty of speaking and writing, and thereby of thinking.'

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

AT THE COTTAGE DOOR.

‘Let us once more see lords and gentlemen beloved by the
common people ; once more see happy cottages.’



STURGES BOURNE'S BILLS.

MARK, and never leave out of mind, that the POOR LAW of *Elizabeth* gave them a compensation, for the *tithes and church lands which the aristocracy had taken away from them*. Let this *always be borne in mind*.

By various acts of the late Parliaments, this compensation was, by degrees, craftily diminished, till, at last, came STURGES BOURNE'S bills; came the alienation of the voices of the middle class in the vestries; came the '*select vestries*' with power to have 'HIRED OVERSEERS'; came, in short, the power of the rich, almost to starve the necessitous at their pleasure, and to compel the labourers to work, in fact, for such wages as they chose to give them. Thus the compact between the landholders and the labourers was broken; thus the latter were deprived of the compensation awarded by the act of ELIZABETH; and thus were the harmony and the happiness of the agricultural community in England destroyed. Hence all the turmoil;

hence the sleepless nights to the farmer, and hence that farewell which he may bid to peace until the COMPENSATION be fully and fairly restored to the people. It must be restored; it shall be restored, or I will end my life in the endeavour to cause the restoration. The first step to be taken would *be to repeal* STURGES BOURNE's *bills*. But instead of that there was this Ministry, two years ago, putting *this very* STURGES BOURNE into a commission to try the rioting labourers, and here they are, now, again, with *this very* same STURGES BOURNE, in what they call their '*poor law commission*.' Here will I take my stand; whatever I have left of labour in me shall be exerted till this object be accomplished, and until the young people be back again in the farmhouses; to effect which latter, would now, with a wise and just Government, be more than the work of a single year. Here will I hold. If there be a God above, 'and that there is, all nature cries aloud in all her works, he must delight in justice,' and justice says, that it is most damnable tyranny to say or to do that which says, that a man ought to be called upon when necessary to venture his life in defence of the land of his birth, and yet, that he has no right to be upon, and to have a living out of, that same land. This is my great point, the best energies of my mind shall be directed towards its accomplishment, and I have the pleadings of reason, of justice, of human nature itself, so loudly on my side, that my efforts must be crowned with

success. The question for the aristocracy to decide upon, is simply this : Will they give way and give up STURGES BOURNE'S bills to begin with, or will they not ? I will soon put them to the test ; and let them remember, that their decision will be *final*. The *Edinburgh Review*, that base creature of the Whig-faction, has just expressed its *alarm*, at the wild notions that some of the people seem to have, about a *general proprietorship in the land*, and about a *division of it amongst the whole of the community*. And, whence has this wild notion come ? Why, from the doctrines of the '*feelosofical*' villains, who have maintained the doctrine, of the *right* of the land-owners to '*clear*' the land of the people ; or, which is the same thing, to deny them a sufficiency to live upon out of the produce of the land. Extremes meet, in this, as in all other cases ; and this doctrine, being such an outrageous insult to common sense and to common humanity, men naturally rush on to the opposite extreme. I, for my part, have always deprecated the latter extreme ; but if at last we be compelled ; if the injustice of the landowners push us, to acknowledge their right of '*clearing*' the country of us, or compelling us to starve amidst abundance raised by our own hands ; if they push us to this acknowledgment, or to insist upon our general right of participation, I am decidedly for the latter. Better, therefore, yield in time ; better repeal STURGES BOURNE'S bills to begin with, and let us once more see lords and

gentlemen beloved by the common people ; once more see happy cottages, cheerful farm-houses, and farmers able to go to sleep without starting every moment at the thought of fires.

William Cobbett.

A WINTER PIECE.

L

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‘I do not care much for snow in town ; but in the country it is
ever a marvel.’



WINTER.

WINTER in the country, without snow, is like a summer without the rose. Snow is winter's specialty, its crowning glory, its last exquisite grace. Snow comes naturally in winter, as foliage comes in summer; but although one may have been familiar with it during forty seasons, it always takes one with a certain pleased surprise and sense of strangeness. In each winter the falling of the first snowflake is an event; it lays hold of the imagination. A child does not ordinarily take notice of the coming of leaves and flowers, but it will sit at a window for an hour, watching the descent of the dazzling apparition, with odd thoughts and fancies in the little brain. Snow attracts the child as the plumage of some rare and foreign bird would. The most prosaic of mortals, when he comes downstairs of a morning, and finds a new soft, white world, instead of the past familiar black one, is conscious of some obscure feeling of pleasure, the springs of which he might find it diffi-

cult to explain. I do not care much for snow in town ; but in the country it is ever a marvel : it wipes out all boundary lines and distinctions between fields ; it clothes the skeletons of trees with a pure wonder ; through the strangely transfigured landscape the streams run black as ink and without a sound ; and over all the cold blue frosty heaven smiles as if in very pleasure at its work. On such a day how windless and composed the atmosphere, how bright the frosty sunlight, from what a distance comes a shout or the rusty caw of a rook ! ‘Earth hath not anything to show more fair.’ And somehow the season seems to infuse a spirit of jollity into everything. As I walk about I fancy the men I meet look ruddier and healthier ; that they talk in louder and cheerier tones ; that their chests heave with a sincerer laughter. They are more charitable I know. Winter binds ‘earth-born companions and fellow mortals’ together, from man to red-breast, and interior domestic life takes a new charm from the strange pallor outside. The good creature Fire feels exhilarated, and licks with its pliant tongue as if pleased and flattered. Sofa and slippers become luxuries. The tea-urn purrs like a fondled cat. In those long warm-lighted evenings, books communicate more of their inmost souls than they do in summer ; and a moment’s glance at the village church-roof, sparkling to the frosty moon, adds warmth to fleecy blankets, and a depth to repose.

The white flakes are coming at last ! Stretch out

your hand—the meteor falls into it lighter than a rose-leaf, and is in a moment a tear. It is as fragile as beautiful. How innocent in appearance the new-fallen snow, the surface of which a descending leaf would dimple almost ! and yet there is nothing fiercer, deadlier, crueller, more treacherous. On wild uplands and moors it covers roads and landmarks, and makes the wanderer travel hopeless miles till he sinks down exhausted ; it steepens his senses in a pleasing stupor, till he fancies he sees the light of his far-off dwelling, and hears the voices of his children who will be orphans before the morn : it smites him on the mouth and face as he dies, and then covers him up, softly as with kisses, tenderly as with eider down, like a sleek-white murderer as it is. In alliance with the demon of wind it will drift and spin along the mountain sides, and in a couple of hours a hundred sheep and their shepherd are smothered in a corry on Ben Nevis. Welded by frost into an avalanche, it slides from its dizzy hold, and falls on an Alpine village, crushing it to powder. A snowflake is weak in itself, but in multitudes it is omnipotent. These terrible crystals have stayed the marches of conquerors and broken the strength of empires. The innumerable flakes flying forth on the Russian wind are deadlier than bullets : they bite more bitterly than Cossack lances. In front, behind, on every side, for leagues and leagues they fall in the dim twilight, flinging themselves in front of the weary soldier's foot, clogging the wheels

of cannon, making the banner an icy sheet, stilling the drum that beat the charge. O weary soldiers of the Empire, eyes that saw the sun of Austerlitz, hearts that love Napoleon—to this grim battle with winter Lodi and Arcola were holiday parades! The Loire will murmur from antique town to town, through pleasant summer lands of France, till it rests in the Spanish sea; vines stretched from pole to pole will glow in setting suns; girls will dance at village festivals; but for you, never more the murmuring river, nor the ripening grape, nor the dancing girl's waist and smile. For you the deadly snow-kisses, the sleep and the dreams that bring death, the dreadful embalming of frosts, potent as the spices that preserve Pharaoh.

Alexander Smith.

THE WATERING-PLACE.

'It is a little sheltered scene, retiring, as it were, from the village
with a great pond in one corner.'



VIOLETING.

MARCH 27TH.—It is a dull grey morning, with a dewy feeling in the air ; fresh, but not windy ; cool, but not cold ;—the very day for a person newly arrived from the heat, the glare, the noise, and the fever of London, to plunge into the remotest labyrinths of the country, and regain the repose of mind, the calmness of heart, which has been lost in that great Babel. I must go violeting—it is a necessity—and I must go alone : the sound of a voice, even my Lizzy's, the touch of Mayflower's head, even the bounding of her elastic foot, would disturb the serenity of feeling which I am trying to recover. I shall go quite alone, with my little basket, twisted like a beehive, which I love so well, because *she* gave it to me, and kept sacred to violets and to those whom I love ; and I shall get out of the high road the moment I can. I would not meet any one just now, even of those whom I best like to meet.

Ha!—Is not that group—a gentleman on a blood-

horse, a lady keeping pace with him so gracefully and easily—see how prettily her veil waves in the wind created by her own rapid motion!—and that gay, gallant boy, on the gallant white Arabian, curveting at their side, but ready to spring before them every instant—is not that chivalrous-looking party Mr. and Mrs. M. and dear B.? No! the servant is in a different livery. It is some of the ducal family, and one of their young Etonians. I may go on. I shall meet no one now; for I have fairly left the road, and am crossing the lea by one of those wandering paths, amidst the gorse, and the heath, and the low broom, which the sheep and lambs have made—a path turfy, elastic, thymy, and sweet, even at this season.

We have the good fortune to live in an unenclosed parish, and may thank the wise obstinacy of two or three sturdy farmers, and the lucky unpopularity of a ranting madcap lord of the manor, for preserving the delicious green patches, the islets of wilderness amidst cultivation, which form, perhaps, the peculiar beauty of English scenery. The common that I am passing now—the lea, as it is called—is one of the loveliest of these favoured spots. It is a little sheltered scene, retiring, as it were, from the village; sunk amidst higher lands, hills would be almost too grand a word: edged on one side by one gay high-road, and intersected by another; and surrounded by a most picturesque confusion of meadows, cottages, farms, and orchards; with a great pond in one corner, unusually

bright and clear, giving a delightful cheerfulness and daylight to the picture. The swallows haunt that pond ; so do the children. There is a merry group round it now ; I have seldom seen it without one. Children love water, clear, bright, sparkling water ; it excites and feeds their curiosity ; it is motion and life.

The path that I am treading leads to a less lively spot, to that large heavy building on one side of the common, whose solid wings, jutting out far beyond the main body, occupy three sides of a square, and give a cold, shadowy look to the court. On one side is a gloomy garden, with an old man digging in it, laid out in straight dark beds of vegetables, potatoes, cabbages, onions, beans ; all earthy and mouldy as a newly dug grave. Not a flower or flowering shrub ! Not a rose-tree or currant-bush ! Nothing but for sober, melancholy use. Oh, how different from the long irregular slips of the cottage gardens, with their gay bunches of polyanthuses and crocuses, their wall-flowers sending sweet odours through the narrow casement, and their gooseberry-trees bursting into a brilliancy of leaf, whose vivid greenness has the effect of a blossom on the eye ! Oh, how different ! On the other side of this gloomy abode is a meadow of that deep, intense emerald hue, which denotes the presence of stagnant water, surrounded by willows at regular distances, and like the garden, separated from the common by a wide, moat-like ditch. That is the

parish workhouse. All about it is solid, substantial, useful;—but so dreary! so cold! so dark! There are children in the court, and yet all is silent. I always hurry past that place as if it were a prison. Restraint, sickness, age, extreme poverty, misery which I have no power to remove or alleviate,—these are the ideas, the feelings, which the sight of those walls excites; yet, perhaps, if not certainly, they contain less of that extreme desolation than the morbid fancy is apt to paint. There will be found order, cleanliness, food, clothing, warmth, refuge for the homeless, medicine and attendance for the sick, rest and sufficiency for old age, and sympathy, the true and active sympathy which the poor show to the poor, for the unhappy. There may be worse places than a parish workhouse—and yet I hurry past it. The feeling, the prejudice, will not be controlled.

Mary Russell Mitford.

AT SUNSET.

‘That long, slow-deepening twilight through which the day in
England lapses gently into darkness.’



THE ENGLISH CLIMATE.

THE low temperature of the country enables the people to bear the dampness, and even to find it conducive to health and enjoyment of life. 'Let it be cold,' said an Englishman to me, as we walked from his villa to the train through a chilling drizzle, 'and I care little if it is damp.' And I found the combination, on the whole, wholesome and not unpleasant. But if England, with its damp atmosphere, were subject to our extremes of heat and cold, it would be almost uninhabitable: it would be as unhealthy in winter as Labrador, in summer as India. I was surprised to see the freedom with which doors were left open for the entrance of the air, and by the unconsciousness of possible harm with which women of the lower classes in the country went about in cold mist, or even in rain, without bonnets or shawls. For as to myself, at times I found this chilly fog pierce to the very marrow of my bones, and make me long for the fire which was not always attainable. And when I did

have it, the comfort that it gave me was not so great as I expected it would be. Fire does not seem to be very warm in England. I never saw a really hot one.

One effect of the climate of England (it must, I think, be the climate) is the mellowing of all sights, and particularly of all sounds. Life there seems softer, richer, sweeter, than it is with us. Bells do not clang so sharp and harsh upon the ear. True, they are not rung so much as they are with us. Even in London on Sunday their sound is not obtrusive. Indeed, the only bell sound in the great city of which I have a distinct memory is Big Ben's delicious, mellow boom. In country walks on Sunday the distant chimes from the little antique spires or towers float to you like silver-tongued voices through the still air. Your own voice is hushed by them if you are with a companion, and you walk on in sweet and silent sadness. I shall never forget the soothing charm of the Bolney chime in Sussex, which, as the sun was leaving the weald to that long, slow-deepening twilight through which the day in England lapses gently into darkness, with no splendour of sunset obsequies, I heard in company with one whose sagacious lips, then hushed for a moment, are silent now forever. These English country chimes are very different from those that stun our ears from Broadway steeples. They are simple, and yet are not formless jangle; but the performers do not under-

take to play opera airs *affetuoso* and *con espressione* with ropes and iron hammers upon hollow tons of metal.

Whether I was favoured by the English climate I do not know, but in addition to this soft, sweet charm which the air seemed to give to everything that was to be seen or heard, I found even late autumn there as verdant and as variously beautiful as early summer is with us, and without the heat from which we suffer. In Sussex the gardens were all abloom, wild flowers lit up the woods, blackberries were ripening in the hedges, birds singing, and everything was fresh and fragrant. Among the birds, I observed the thrush and the robin-redbreast; the latter not that tawny-breasted variety of the singing thrush which is here called a robin, but a little bird about half as large, with a thin, pointed bill, a breast of crimson, and a note like a loud and prolonged chirrup. It would be charming if we could have this man-trusting little feathered fellow with us; but I fear that he could not bear our winters. In Warwickshire I found roses blooming, blooming in great masses half-way up the sides of a two-story cottage on the road from Stratford-on-Avon to Kenilworth; and this was in the very last days of October. True, I had only a few days before shivered through a rainy morning drive in Essex, when the chill dampness seemed to strike into my very heart; but on the

whole I found myself under English skies healthy, happy, and the enjoyer of a succession of new delights, which yet seemed to me mine by birth-right.

Richard Grant White. ·

THE REAPERS.

‘The reapers, that with whetted sickles stand,
Gathering the falling ears i’ th’ other hand.’



AN ECLOGUE TO MASTER JONSON.

Damon.

I N those indulgent ears
I dare unload the burden of my fears.
The reapers, that with whetted sickles stand,
Gathering the falling ears i' th' other hand,
Though they endure the scorching summer's heat,
Have yet some wages to allay their sweat ;
The lopper that doth fell the sturdy oak,
Labours, yet has good pay for every stroke ;
The ploughman is rewarded : only we
That sing are paid with our own melody.
Rich churls have learnt to praise us, and admire,
But have not learn't to think us worth the hire.
So toiling ants, perchance, delight to hear
The summer music of the grasshopper,
But after rather let him starve with pain,
Than spare him from their store one single grain.

As when great Juno's beauteous bird displays
 Her starry tail, the boys do run and gaze
 At her proud train ; so look they nowadays
 On poets, and do think, if they but praise
 Or pardon what we sing, enough they do :
 Ay, and 'tis well if they do so much, too.
 My rage is swell'd so high I cannot speak it,
 Had I Pan's pipe, or thine, I now should break it !

Tityrus.

Let moles delight in earth, swine dunghills rake,
 Crows prey on carrion, frogs a pleasure take
 In slimy pools, and niggards wealth admire ;
 But we, whose souls are made of purer fire,
 Have other aims. Who songs for gain hath made,
 Has of a liberal science framed a trade.
 Hark how the nightingale in yonder tree,
 Hid in the boughs, warbles melodiously
 Her various music forth, while the whole quire
 Of other birds flock round, and all admire !
 But who rewards her ? will the ravenous kite
 Part with her prey to pay for her delight.
 Or will the foolish, painted, prattling jay
 (Now turn'd a hearer) to requite her play
 Lend her a straw ? or any of the rest
 Fetch her a feather when she builds her nest ?
 Yet sings she ne'er the less, till every den
 Do catch at her last notes. And shall I then
 His fortunes, Damon, 'bove my own commend,
 Who can more cheese into the market send ?

AN ECLOGUE TO MASTER JONSON. 175

Clowns for posterity may cark and care,
That cannot outlive death but in an heir !
By more than wealth we propagate our names,
That trust not to successions, but our fames.
Let hidebound churls yoke the laborious ox,
Milk hundred goats, and shear a thousand flocks,
Plant gainful orchards, and in silver shine,
Thou of all fruits shouldst only prune the vine,
Whose fruit, being tasted, might erect thy brain
To teach some ravishing, high, and lofty strain ;
The double birth of Bacchus to express,
First in the grape, the second in the press.
And therefore tell me, boy, what is't can move
Thy mind, once fixed on the Muses' love ?

Damon.

When I contented liv'd by Cham's fair streams,
Without desire to see the prouder Thames,
I had no flock to care for, but could sit
Under a willow covert, and repeat
Those deep and learned lays, on every part
Grounded on judgment, subtlety, and art,
That the great tutor to the greatest king,
The shepherd of Stagira us'd to sing—
The shepherd of Stagira, that unfolds
All Nature's closet, shows whate'er it holds :
The matter, form, sense, motion, place, and measure
Of everything contain'd in her vast treasure.
Ah, Tityrus ! I would with all my heart,
Even with the best of my carv'd mazers part

To hear him, as he us'd divinely show
 What 'tis that paints the divers-colour'd bow :
 Whence thunders are discharg'd, whence the winds
 stray,

What foot through heaven hath worn the Milky Way.
 And yet I let this true delight alone,
 Call'd thence to keep the flock of Corydon.
 Ah ! woe is me, another's flock to keep !
 The care is mine ; the master shears the sheep !
 A flock it was that would not keep together ;
 A flock that had no fleece when it came hither.
 Nor would it learn to listen to my lays,
 For 'twas a flock made up of several strays.
 And now I would return to Cham, I hear
 A desolation frights the Muses there.
 With rustic swains I mean to spend my time ;
 Teach me there, father, to preserve my rhyme.

Tityrus.

To-morrow morning I will counsel thee,
 Meet me at Faunus' beech ; for now you see
 How larger shadows from the mountains fall,
 And Corydon doth *Damon*, *Damon* call.

Damon.

'Tis time my flock were in the fold,
 More than high time. Did you not erst behold
 How Hesperus above yon clouds appear'd,
 Hesperus leading forth his beauteous herd ?

Thomas Randolph.

THE COUNTRY INN.

‘The *incognito* of an inn is one of its striking privileges—“lord of one’s self, uncumbered with a name.”



ON TAKING ONE'S EASE AT ONE'S INN.

I N general, a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects ; it should be reserved for Table-talk. Lamb is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out of doors ; because he is the best within. I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey ; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at approach of nightfall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom ; and then after enquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to 'take one's ease at one's inn !' These eventful moments in our

lives' history are too precious, too full of solid, heart-felt happiness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop: they will do to talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea,

‘The cups that cheer, but not inebriate,’

and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit considering what we shall have for supper—eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal-cutlet! Sancho in such a situation once fixed on cow-heel; and his choice, though he could not help it, is not to be disparaged. Then, in the intervals of pictured scenery and Shandean contemplation, to catch the preparation and the stir in the kitchen, getting ready for the gentleman in the parlour. *Procul, O procul este profani!* These hours are sacred to silence and to musing, to be treasured up in the memory, and to feed the source of smiling thoughts hereafter. I would not waste them in idle talk; or if I must have the integrity of fancy broken in upon, I would rather it were by a stranger than a friend. A stranger takes his hue and character from the time and place; he is a part of the furniture and costume of an inn. If he is a Quaker, or from the West Riding of Yorkshire, so much the better. I do not even try to sympathise with him, and he breaks no squares. How I love to see the camps of the

gypsies, and to sigh my soul into that sort of life. If I express this feeling to another, he may qualify and spoil it with some objection. I associate nothing with my travelling companion but present objects and passing events. In his ignorance of me and my affairs, I in a manner forget myself. But a friend reminds one of other things, rips up old grievances, and destroys the abstraction of the scene. He comes in ungraciously between us and our imaginary character. Something is dropped in the course of conversation that gives a hint of your profession and pursuits; or from having some one with you that knows the less sublime portions of your history, it seems that other people do. You are no longer a citizen of the world; but your 'unhoused free condition is put into circumspection and confine.' The *incognito* of an inn is one of its striking privileges—'lord of one's self, uncumbered with a name.' Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweetbreads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening—and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlour!* One may take one's choice of all characters in this romantic state of uncertainty as to one's real pretensions, and

become indefinitely respectable and negatively right-worshipful. We baffle prejudice and disappoint conjecture ; and from being so to others, begin to be objects of curiosity and wonder even to ourselves. We are no more those hackneyed common-places that we appear in the world ; an inn restores us to the level of nature, and quits scores with society !

William Hazlitt.

UNDER THE MOONBEAMS.

‘I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon
a lovely prospect.’



THE PASSION FOR LAND- SCAPE DRAWING.

To the REV. JOHN NEWTON.

DEAR SIR,

Olney, May 3, 1780.

YOU indulge me in such a variety of subjects, and allow me such a latitude of excursion in this scribbling employment, that I have no excuse for silence. I am much obliged to you for swallowing such boluses as I send you, for the sake of my gilding, and verily believe I am the only man alive from whom they would be welcome to a palate like yours. I wish I could make them more splendid than they are, more alluring to the eye, at least, if not more pleasing to the taste; but my leaf gold is tarnished, and has received such a tinge from the vapours that are ever brooding over my mind, that I think it no small proof of your partiality to me, that you will read my letters. I am not fond of long-winded meta-

phors ; I have always observed that they halt at the latter end of their progress, and so do mine. I deal much in ink indeed, but not such ink as is employed by poets and writers of essays. Mine is a harmless fluid, and guilty of no deceptions but such as may prevail without the least injury to the person imposed on. I draw mountains, valleys, woods, and streams, and ducks and dab-chicks. I admire them myself, and Mrs. Unwin admires them ; and her praise, and my praise put together, are fame enough for me. Oh ! I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon a lovely prospect. My eyes drink the rivers as they flow. If every human being upon earth could think for one quarter of an hour as I have done for many years, there might perhaps be many miserable men among them, but not an unawakened one would be found from the arctic to the antarctic circle. At present, the difference between them and me is greatly to their advantage. I delight in baubles, and know them to be so ; for rested in, and viewed without a reference to their Author, what is the earth, what are the planets, what is the sun itself but a bauble ? Better for a man never to have seen them, or to see them with the eyes of a brute, stupid and unconscious of what he beholds, than not to be able to say, ‘The Maker of all these wonders is my Friend!’ Their eyes have never been opened to see that they are trifles ; mine have been, and will be till they are closed for ever. They think a fine

estate, a large conservatory, a hothouse rich as a West Indian garden, things of consequence; visit them with pleasure, and muse upon them with ten times more. I am pleased with a frame of four lights, doubtful whether the few pines it contains will ever be worth a farthing; amuse myself with a greenhouse which Lord Bute's gardener could take upon his back and walk away; and when I have paid it the accustomed visit, and watered it, and given it air, I say to myself—'This is not mine, it is a play-thing lent me for the present; I must leave it soon.'

William Cowper.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.

‘The present building has no pretensions to antiquity, and is as I suppose, of no earlier date than the beginning of the reign of Henry VII.’



SELBORNE CHURCH.

FROM the silence of Domesday respecting churches, it has been supposed that few villages had any at the time when that record was taken ; but Selborne, we see, enjoyed the benefit of one : hence, we may conclude, that this place was in no abject state even at that very distant period. How many fabrics have succeeded each other since the days of Radfredrus the presbyter, we cannot pretend to say ; our business leads us to a description of the present edifice, in which we shall be circumstantial.

Our church, which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, consists of three aisles, and measures fifty-four feet in length, by forty-seven in breadth, being almost as broad as it is long. The present building has no pretensions to antiquity, and is, as I suppose, of no earlier date than the beginning of the reign of Henry VII. It is perfectly plain and unadorned, without painted glass, carved work, sculpture, or tracery. But when I say it has no claim to antiquity, I would mean

to be understood the fabric in general ; for the pillars, which support the roof, are undoubtedly old, being of that low, squat, thick order usually called Saxon. These, I should imagine, upheld the roof of a former church, which, falling into decay, was rebuilt on those massy props, because their strength had preserved them from the injuries of time. Upon these rest blunt Gothic arches, such as prevailed in the reign above-mentioned, and by which, as a criterion, we would prove the date of the building.

At the bottom of the south aisle, between the west and south doors, stands the font, which is deep and capacious, and consists of three massy round stones, piled one on another, without the least ornament or sculpture ; the cavity at the top is lined with lead, and has a pipe at the bottom to convey off the water after the sacred ceremony is performed.

The east end of the south aisle is called the South Chancel, and, till within these thirty years, was divided off by old carved Gothic framework of timber, having been a private chantry. In this opinion we are more confirmed by observing two Gothic niches within the space, the one in the east wall and the other in the south, near which there probably stood images and altars.

In the middle aisle there is nothing remarkable ; but I remember when its beams were hung with garlands in honour of young women of the parish, reputed to have died virgins ; and recollect to have seen the clerk's wife cutting, in white paper, the resemblances of

gloves, and ribbons to be twisted in knots and roses, to decorate these memorials of chastity. In the church of Faringdon, which is the next parish, many garlands of this sort still remain.

The north aisle is narrow and low, with a sloping ceiling, reaching within eight or nine feet of the floor. It had originally a flat roof, covered with lead, till within a century past, a churchwarden stripping off the lead, in order, as he said, to have it mended, sold it to a plumber, and ran away with the money. This aisle has no door, for an obvious reason ; because the north side of the churchyard, being surrounded by the vicarage-garden, affords no path to that side of the church. Nothing can be more irregular than the pews of this church, which are of all dimensions and heights, being patched up according to the fancy of the owners ; but whoever nicely examines them will find that the middle aisle had, on each side, a regular row of benches of solid oak, all alike, with a low back-board to each. These we should not hesitate to say are coeval with the present church ; and especially as it is to be observed that, at their ends, they are ornamented with carved, blunt Gothic niches, exactly correspondent to the arches of the church, and to a niche in the south wall. The fourth aisle also has a row of these benches ; but some are decayed through age, and the rest much disguised by modern alterations.

We must now proceed to the chancel, properly so called, which seems to be coeval with the church, and

is in the same plain unadorned style, though neatly kept. This room measures thirty-one feet in length, and sixteen feet and a half in breadth, and is wainscoted all round, as high as to the bottom of the windows. The space for the communion-table is raised two steps above the rest of the floor, and railed in with oaken balusters. Here I shall say somewhat of the windows of the chancel in particular, and of the whole fabric in general. They are mostly of that simple and unadorned sort called Lancet, some single, some double, and some in triplets. At the east end of the chancel are two of a moderate size, near each other; and in the north wall two very distant small ones, unequal in length and height: and in the south wall are two, one on each side of the chancel door, that are broad and squat, and of a different order. At the east end of the south aisle of the church there is a large lancet-window in a triplet; and two very small, narrow, single ones in the south wall, and a broad, squat window beside, and a double lancet one in the west end; so that the appearance is very irregular. In the north aisle are two windows, made shorter when the roof was sloped; and in the north transept a large triple window, shortened at the time of a repair in 1721: when over it was opened a round one of considerable size, which affords an agreeable light, and renders that chantry the most cheerful part of the edifice.

Gilbert White.

~~THE WATERING-PLACE.~~

AT SEA AND ON SHORE.

‘And surely me thinketh we cannot better bestow our time on
the Sea, then in aduise how to behaue our selues when we come
to ye shore.’



B.F. 1845

FOR TRAVELLERS.

E^{Vphues} hauing gotten all things necessary for his voyage into *England*, accompanied onelye with *Philantus*, tooke shipping the first of December, 1579, by our English Computation: Who as one resolved to see that with his eies, which he had oftentimes heard with his eares, began to vse this perswasion to his friend *Philantus*, aswell to counsell him how he should behaue him-selfe in *England*, as to comfort him beeing nowe on the Seas.

As I haue found thee willing to be a fellow in my trauell, so would I haue thee ready to be a follower of my counsell: in the one shalt thou shew thy good will, in the other manifest thy wisdome. Wee are now sayling into an Iland of smal compasse as I gesse by their Maps, but of great ciuility as I hear by their man[n]ers, which if it be so, it behouueth vs to be more inquisitiue of their conditions, then of their countrey: and more carefull to marke the natures of their men, then curious to note the situation of the place.

And surely me thinketh we cannot better bestow our time on the Sea, then in aduise how to behaue our selues when we come to ye shore: for greater daunger is ther to ariue in a straunge countrey where the inhabitants be pollitique, then to be tossed with the troublesome waues, where the Mariners be vnskilfull. Fortune guideth men in the rough Sea, but Wisdome ruleth them in a straunge land.

If Trauailers in this our age were as warye of their conditions, as they be venterous of their bodyes, or as willing to reape profit by their paines, as they are to endure perill for their pleasure, they would either prefer their own soyle before a straunge Land, or good counsell before their owne conceyte. But as the young scholler in *Athens* went to heare *Demosthenes* eloquence at *Corinth*, and was entangled with *Lais* beautie, so most of our trauailers which pretend to get a smacke of straunge language to sharpen their wits, are infected with vanity by [in] following their wils. Daunger and delight growe both vppon one stalke, the Rose and the Canker in one bud, white and blacke are commonly in one border. Seeing then my good *Philautus*, that we are not to conquer wilde beasts by fight, but to confer with wise men by pollicie: We ought to take greater heede that we be not intrapped in follye, then feare to bee subdued by force. And heere by the way it shall not be amisse, aswell to driue away the tediousnesse of time, as to delight our selues with talke, to

rehearse an olde treatise of an auncient Hermitte, who meeting with a pylgrime at his Cell, vttered a straunge and delightfull tale, which if thou *Philautus* art disposed to heare, and these present attentieue to haue, I will spende some time about it, knowing it both fit for vs that be trauailers to learne wit, and not vnfit for these that be Merchaunts to get wealth.

Philautus although the stumpes of loue so sticked in his mind, that he rather wished to heare an Eelegie in *Ouid*, then a tale of an Hermit: yet was hee willing to lend his eare to his friende, who had left his heart with his Lady, for you shal vnderstand that *Philautus* hauing read the Cooling Carde which *Euphues* sent him, sought rather to aunswere it, then allowe it. And I doubt not but if *Philautus* fall into his olde vaine in *England*, you shall heare of his new deuce in *Italy*. And although some shall thinke it impertinent to the historie, they shall not finde it repugnant, no more then in one nosegay to set two flowers, or in one counterfaite two coulours, which bringeth more delight, then disliking.

Philautus aunswered *Euphues* in this manner.

MY good *Euphues*, I am as willing to heare thy tale, as I am to be pertaker of thy trauaile, yet I knowe not howe it commeth to passe, that my eyes are eyther heauy against foule weather, or my head so drowsie against some ill newes, that this tale

shall come in good time to bring me a sleepe, and
then shall I get no harme by the Hermit, though I
get no good.

John Lyly.

THE STEPPING-STONES.

‘Moist, bright and green the landscape laughs around ;
Full swell the woods ; their very music wakes,
Mixed in wild concert, with the warbling brooks
Increased.’ . . .



APRIL WEATHER.

BE patient, swains ; these cruel-seeming winds
Blow not in vain. Far hence they keep repress'd
Those deep'ning clouds on clouds, surcharg'd with rain,
That o'er the vast Atlantic hither borne,
In endless train, would quench the summer blaze,
And, cheerless, drown the crude unripen'd year.

The north-east spends his rage ; he now shut up
Within his iron cave, th' effusive south
Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of heaven
Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distent.
At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
Scarce staining ether ; but by swift degrees,
In heaps on heaps the doubling vapour sails
Along the loaded sky, and mingling deep
Sits on th' horizon round a settled gloom :
Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,
Oppressing life ; but lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,
The wish of Nature. Gradual sinks the breeze

Into a perfect calm ; that not a breath
Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
Or rustling turn the many twinkling leaves
Of aspin tall. Th' uncurling floods, diffus'd
In glassy breadth, seem through delusive lapse
Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all,
And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and mute-imploring eye
The falling verdure. Hush'd in short suspense,
The plummy people streak their wings with oil,
To throw the lucid moisture trickling off ;
And wait th' approaching sign to strike, at once,
Into the general choir. Even mountains, vales,
And forests seem, impatient, to demand
The promis'd sweetness. Man superior walks
Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
And looking lively gratitude. At last,
The clouds consign their treasures to the fields ;
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow,
In large effusion, o'er the freshen'd world.
The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard,
By such as wander through the forest walks,
Beneath the umbrageous multitude of leaves.
But who can hold the shade, while Heaven descends
In universal bounty, shedding herbs,
And fruits, and flowers, on Nature's ample lap ?
Swift fancy fir'd anticipates their growth :
And, while the milky nutriment distils,

Beholds the kindling country colour round.

Thus all day long the full-distended clouds
Indulge their genial stores, and well-shower'd earth
Is deep enrich'd with vegetable life ;
Till, in the western sky, the downward sun
Looks out, effulgent, from amid the flush
Of broken clouds, gay-shifting to his beam.
The rapid radiance instantaneous strikes
Th' illumin'd mountain, through the forest streams,
Shakes on the floods, and in a yellow mist,
Far smoking o'er th' interminable plain,
In twinkling myriads lights the dewy gems.
Moist, bright, and green, the landscape laughs around.
Full swell the woods ; their very music wakes,
Mix'd in wild concert with the warbling brooks
Increas'd, the distant bleatings of the hills,
And hollow lows responsive from the vales,
Whence blending all the sweeten'd zephyr springs.
Mean time refracted from yon eastern cloud,
Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow
Shoots up immense ; and every hue unfolds,
In fair proportion running from the red,
To where the violet fades into the sky.
Here, awful Newton, the dissolving clouds
Form, fronting on the sun, thy show'ry prism ;
And to the sage-instructed eye unfold
The various twine of light by thee disclos'd
From the white mingling maze. Not so the boy ;
He wondering views the bright enchantment bend,

Delightful o'er the radiant fields, and runs
To catch the falling glory ; but amaz'd
Beholds th' amusive arch before him fly,
Then vanish quite away. Still night succeeds,
A softened shade, and saturated earth
Awaits the morning beam, to give to light,
Rais'd through ten thousand different plastic tubes,
The balmy treasures of the former day.

James Thomson.

THE MARKET-CART.

‘The footpath faintly marked, the horse-track wild,
And formidable length of plashy lane,
(Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
Or easier links connecting place with place)
Have vanished.’ . . .



CHANGES IN THE COUNTRY.

‘HAPPY,’ rejoined the Wanderer, ‘they who gain
A panegyric from your generous tongue !
But, if to these wayfarers once pertain’d
Aught of romantic interest, ’tis gone ;
Their purer service, in this realm at least,
Is past for ever. An inventive age
Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
To most strange issues. I have lived to mark
A new and unforeseen creation rise
From out the labours of a peaceful land,
Wielding her potent enginery to frame
And to produce, with appetite as keen
As that of war, which rest not night or day,
Industrious to destroy ! With fruitless pains
Might one like me *now* visit many a tract
Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod again,
A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,

Wish'd for, or welcome, wheresoe'er he came—
Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill;
Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
And dignified by battlements and towers
Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.
The footpath faintly mark'd, the horse-track wild,
And formidable length of plashy lane.
(Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
Or easier links connecting place with place,)
Have vanish'd—swallow'd up by stately roads,
Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
Of England's farthest glens. The earth has lent
Her waters, air her breezes; and the sail
Of traffic glides with ceaseless interchange,
Glistening along the low and woody dale,
Or on the naked mountain's lofty side.
Meanwhile, at social industry's command,
How quick, how vast an increase! From the germ
Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
Here a huge town, continuous and compact,
Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,
Where not a habitation stood before.
The abodes of men irregularly mass'd
Like trees in forests,—spread through spacious tracts
O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
Hangs permanent and plentiful as wreaths
Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.
And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,

CHANGES IN THE COUNTRY. 223

He sees the barren wilderness erased,
Or disappearing ; triumph that proclaims
How much the mild directress of the plough
Owes to alliance with these new-born arts !
Hence is the wide sea peopled,—and the shores
Of Britain are resorted to by ships
Freighted from every climate of the world
With the world's choicest produce. Hence that sum
Of keels that rest within her crowded ports
Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays ;
That animating spectacle of sails
Which, through her inland regions, to and fro
Pass with the respirations of the tide,
Perpetual, multitudinous ! Finally,
Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice
Of thunder, daunting those who would approach
With hostile purposes the blessèd isle,
Truth's consecrated residence, the seat
Impregnable of liberty and peace.

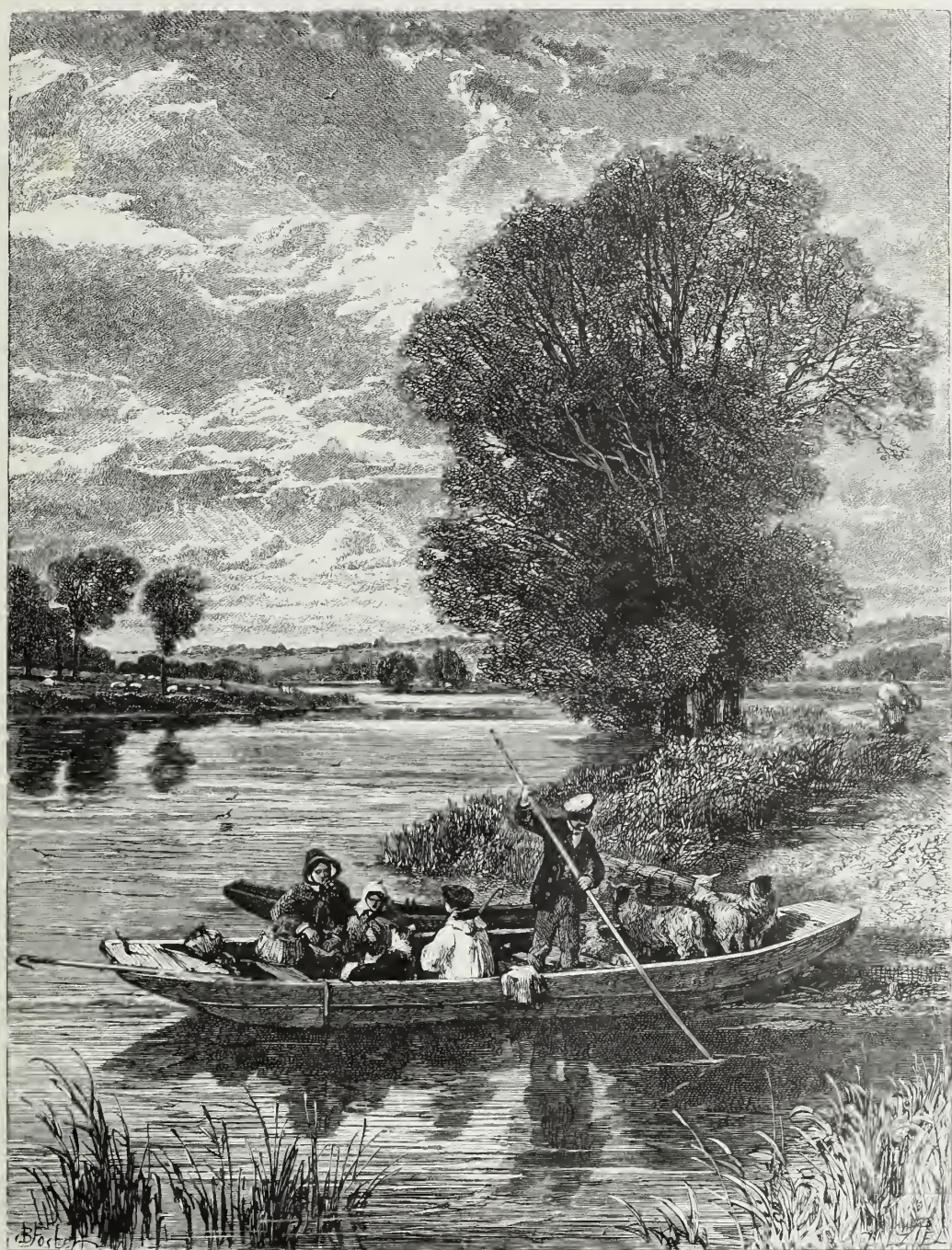
‘ And yet, O happy pastor of a flock
Faithfully watch'd, and, by that loving care
And Heaven's good providence, preserved from taint !
With you I grieve, when on the darker side
Of this great change I look ; and there behold,
Through strong temptation of those gainful arts,
Such outrage done to nature as compels
The indignant power to justify herself ;
Yea, to avenge her violated rights,

For England's bane. When soothing darkness spreads
O'er hill and vale,' the Wanderer thus express'd
His recollections, 'and the punctual stars,
While all things else are gathering to their homes,
Advance, and in the firmament of heaven
Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturb'd,
As if their silent company were charged
With peaceful admonitions for the heart
Of all-beholding man, earth's thoughtful lord,
Then in full many a region, once like this
The assured domain of calm simplicity
And pensive quiet, an unnatural light,
Prepared for never-resting labour's eyes,
Breaks from a many-window'd fabric huge :
And at the appointed hour a bell is heard,—
Of harsher import than the curfew-knoll
That spake the Norman conqueror's stern behest,
A local summons to unceasing toil.

William Wordsworth.

THE FERRY-BOAT.

‘At the Ferry.’



THE SCHOLAR GIPSY.

SCREEN'D is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped
field,

And here till sundown, shepherd ! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils creep ;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August-sun with shade ;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book —
Come let me read the oft-read tale again !
The story of that Oxford scholar poor
Of shining parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy lore,

And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life enquired;
Whereat he answer'd that the gipsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
'And I,' he said, 'the secret of their art,
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill.'

This said, he left them, and returned no more.—
But rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,
The same the gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
Had found him seated at their entering.

But, mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;

And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place ;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer heats,
Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumnor hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground !
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round ;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more !—
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way ;
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers—the frail-leafed, white anemony,
Dark bluebells drench'd with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
But none hath words she can report of thee !

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass,
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering
Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often pass'd thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown ;
Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air—
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone !

Matthew Arnold.

THE WATER MILL.

‘I loved the brimming wave that swam
‘Thro’ quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still.’



THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I LOVED, and love dispell'd the fear
That I should die an early death :
For love possess'd the atmosphere,
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy ?
For I was alter'd, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
 When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
 I saw the village lights below ;
I knew your taper far away,
 And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
 Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill ;
 And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she sits.'
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
 Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
'O that I were beside her now !
 O will she answer if I call ?
O would she give me vow for vow,
 Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?'

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;
 And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;
 Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.
At last you rose and moved the light,
 And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
 And all the casement darken'd there.

Lord Tennyson.

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